

TTD NEWS RELEASE

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FRA's Decision on Crew Size Undermines Rail Safety

Washington, DC – Larry Willis, president of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), issues this statement in response to the Federal Railroad Administration's decision not to regulate crew size and to preempt current state laws that require two-person crews:

“The FRA’s announcement that it will pull back a proposed rule to require two-person crews on freight and passenger trains while at the same time preempting states from regulating in this key safety area is both absurd and dangerous. It places the profits of the rail industry over the safety of rail workers and the tens of thousands of communities through which freight railroads travel. We do not understand how political appointees in Washington can say they will do nothing and tell state governments they can no longer regulate the safety of the freight trains that run in their own backyards.

“Operating freight trains that can be more than two-miles long and are often carrying hazardous materials is a complex and demanding job that requires two qualified crewmembers – a conductor and an engineer – to work as a team to ensure safety, efficiency, and compliance with federal regulations. Despite the skill and precision needed to operate today’s highly technical locomotives, industry executives have consistently fought for policies that will allow them to operate with a single crewmember. This is simply an attempt to satisfy the wishes of Wall Street investors with little regard for the risks posed by this misguided staffing scheme.

“With no federal regulations mandating freight train crew size, six states have stepped up to require two qualified crew members and 22 states are considering similar legislation. Today’s misguided decision seeks to overturn these critical safety laws, and offers nothing from the FRA in its place.

“Working families deserve better. Transportation labor will continue to fight for good, safe jobs in the freight rail industry and pursue policies that enhance the safety of rail workers and the communities through which these trains travel.”

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The Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), provides a bold voice for workers in every mode of transportation and is devoted to protecting middle-class jobs, expanding collective bargaining and ensuring modern, safe and secure transportation operations and infrastructure. For more information visit us at www.ttd.org.

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